

Despite how common it is to experience severe psychological distress, substance use problems, and mental illness, there is still considerable stigma associated with mental health treatment. This month, we must bring mental illness out of the shadows and encourage treatment for those who might benefit; it is our shared responsibility to recognize the signs of psychological and emotional distress and to support those in need. We must strive to remove the stigma around mental illness and its treatment, overcome fear and misunderstanding, and make sure all those dealing with a mental health issue know they are not alone. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness—taking action to help yourself is a sign of strength. If you or someone you know is in need of immediate assistance, call 1-800-662-HELP. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline also offers immediate assistance for all Americans, including service members and veterans, at 1-800-273-TALK.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2015 as National Mental Health Awareness Month. I call upon citizens, government agencies, organizations, health care providers, and research institutions to raise mental health awareness and continue helping Americans live longer, healthier lives.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-ninth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 9268 of April 30, 2015

Older Americans Month, 2015

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

In America, every person who is willing to work hard and play by the rules should be able to build a life of opportunity and prosperity. We learned this simple truth from our oldest generation—the women and men who relentlessly pursued progress throughout the 20th century. Drivers of enormous change, they have enriched our Nation and bravely defended the values we cherish; they have broken down barriers and blazed pathways for all who followed; and they have raised us all and endowed us with a freer, fairer, more equal world.

After a lifetime of contributions, they have earned our care and respect, and they deserve to live out their years with dignity and independence. Our Nation is strongest when older Americans live comfortably in their golden years and have the opportunity to continue to contribute to the fabric of the country and society they helped to shape. This month, we celebrate the accomplishments and sacrifices of our elders, and we reaffirm our belief that the promise of our Nation extends to Americans of all ages.

The United States is entering a new era, and the face of our Nation is growing older and more diverse. For the next 15 years, thousands of Americans

will reach retirement age every day, and by 2030, there will be more than twice as many older Americans as there were at the beginning of this century. This growing population is a tremendous national asset. By changing the way we think and talk about aging—by focusing on the opportunities of aging rather than the limitations—we can work to maximize the potential of this generation and ensure they continue to thrive as they age.

To address the changing landscape of aging and advance policies that help older Americans pursue their fullest measure of happiness, this summer my Administration will host the 2015 White House Conference on Aging. By connecting older Americans, their families, caregivers, advocates, community leaders, and experts, the Conference is an important chance to continue our efforts to safeguard retirement security, promote healthy aging, provide long-term services and support, and protect older Americans from abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act, as well as the 80th anniversary of Social Security. For decades, these landmark achievements have stood as pillars of economic opportunity for millions of Americans and reflected the promise we make to our seniors. As President, I have worked tirelessly to strengthen these programs. Throughout the last half-century, the Older Americans Act has empowered older Americans by upholding their rights and supporting social and nutrition services, as well as a nationwide network of employment, training, and research programs. These vital services help millions of seniors across our Nation. I am also proud of the progress we have made during my Administration to improve Medicare, which provides essential health care and security for older Americans. And I am committed to further strengthening Medicare by bolstering access to care for beneficiaries, encouraging better outcomes, and improving long-term sustainability.

Social Security is one of the most important and successful programs ever established in the United States, and we must make certain it is solvent and viable for the American people, now and in the future. I am fighting to ensure any reforms will protect retirement security for the most vulnerable, including low-income seniors, and maintain the robust disability and survivors' benefits that help families after they have paid into the system. To build on this legacy, I started the *myRA* program, a new type of savings account that provides additional pathways for Americans to build their nest egg, and I have called for new rules to require financial advisors to put their clients' interests before their own—ensuring all who responsibly prepare for retirement receive the best advice possible.

Our elders forged a bright future for all our Nation's children, and they deserve the best America has to offer. As heirs to their proud legacy, we must reach for the world they have made possible. During Older Americans Month, we lift up all those whose life's work has made ours a little easier, and we recommit to showing them the fullest care, support, and respect of a grateful Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2015 as Older Americans Month. I call upon all Americans of all ages to acknowledge the contributions of older Americans during this month and throughout the year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-ninth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 9269 of April 30, 2015

Loyalty Day, 2015

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As Americans, we are united not by the circumstances of our birth or our station in life, but by our fidelity to a set of shared ideals and unalienable rights. The principles of freedom, justice, and equality for all are at the very core of who we are as a Nation. We believe firmly in the power of democracy and opportunity—but we know that these blessings are only what we make of them, and that our experiment in self-government gives work and purpose to each new generation. Today, we recommit to the profoundly patriotic work of doing all we can to better the country we love.

Throughout the course of our history, our values have sustained us through periods of tremendous struggle and times of great prosperity. They found expression in the courage of patriots who loved this country so much that they were willing to risk everything to realize its promise. It was an enormous faith in what our country could be that led hopeful women and men to march on Washington, waving the American Flag—even as they were denied their fundamental rights. And it was the understanding that our Union is a constant work in progress that guided our forebears through places like Seneca Falls, Selma, and Stonewall.

As a Nation, we know the journey to perfect our Union is unending, and we are strong enough to be self-critical. We can look upon our imperfections and decide that it is within our power to remake our country to more closely align with our highest ideals. On Loyalty Day, we reaffirm the belief that loving this great Nation requires more than singing its praises or avoiding uncomfortable truths. It requires the willingness to speak out for what is right and to recognize that change depends on our actions, our attitudes, and the values we teach our children. Let us never forget America is exceptional because we each have the capacity to shape our own destiny and change the course of our Union's history.

In order to recognize the American spirit of loyalty and the sacrifices that so many have made for our Nation, the Congress, by Public Law 85–529 as amended, has designated May 1 of each year as “Loyalty Day.” On this day, let us reaffirm our allegiance to the United States of America and pay tribute to the heritage of American freedom.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2015, as Loyalty Day. This Loyalty Day, I call upon all the people of the United States to join in support of this national observance, whether by displaying the Flag of the United States or pledging allegiance to the Republic for which it stands.